

# Nature Connections

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • March/April 2014



## The Value Of Native Plants

There are many reasons why landscape professionals and Missouri homeowners are increasingly turning to native plants for their landscaping needs. They have discovered that using native plants can save them time and money, help with storm water management, and can also be important for wildlife conservation efforts. But one of the best things about using native plants is that your yard can have unique beauty by using plants that are different from what is currently seen in most landscaping.

Incorporating native plants into your landscape can save you time and money by requiring less water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Our native plants have had thousands of years to adapt to our soil and climate and are, therefore, better able to withstand the wild extremes of Missouri's weather. If native plants are put in the correct location, they require little water once they are established with the exception of severe drought. Fertilizing natives is usually discouraged because it can encourage leggy growth since many of our plants are used to growing in less fertile soil. And pesticides are normally not needed because our plants have adapted to our native insects and over thousands of years they have achieved a healthy balance.

For landowners that have issues with poor drainage and standing water on their property, establishing a rain garden by using moisture-loving plants is a great solution. Rain gardens capture storm water from impervious surfaces, such as roads and roofs, allowing water to slowly percolate into the soil which reduces erosion. The plants also act as filters by removing pollutants which helps to protect the quality of our groundwater and streams.

*Native plants can save time and money*



**Purple coneflower is easy to grow and every part of the plant has a medicinal use.**

By using native trees, shrubs, perennials, and grasses, you can also help with wildlife conservation efforts by supplying food and shelter for a wide array of wildlife. Besides providing fruit, seeds, and nuts for larger animals, native plants are needed by insects. The flowers of native plants are used as nectar and pollen sources by many insects and even hummingbirds. The foliage is eaten by the larvae of butterflies and moths. In fact, their larvae are often restricted to eating native plants. Birds, in turn, rely on adult insects and their larvae as food for their young. Without native plants providing food for insects, our birds would not be able to survive.

Besides all of the benefits listed above, incorporating native plants into your landscape will make your yard uniquely beautiful. Drive down most city streets and you will see the same plants used repeatedly; Bradford/callery pears, yews, knock-out roses, and burning bushes are just a few of the landscaping plants frequently seen. Not only are these plants over used, but they are often barren deserts for much of our wildlife providing

little benefit if any at all. In fact, some of them are becoming invasive species which makes them a definite detriment to our wildlife.

One example of an invasive species is the Bradford/callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). They grow quickly, flower prolifically, and will tolerate a wide variety of soils—all characteristics of an invasive species. These trees are now invading fields, hedgerows, roadsides, and even the understories of some forested areas. Callery pears can form dense thickets that outcompete native plants for sunlight, water, soil, and space. As they take over, they reduce the diversity of native plant species and therefore reduce the variety and number of wildlife that can be sustained. Good native substitutes for callery pear are serviceberry, yellowwood, or red buckeye to name a few.

You can learn more about the beauty and value of native plants (and even take some home) by attending one of the upcoming native plant events. Check the April events for the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center for more details.

— Kim Banner, *Naturalist*

*Missourians care about conserving forests, fish, and wildlife.*

# Joplin Office in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center

201 W. Riviera Drive, Suite B, Joplin, MO 64804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/292](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/292)



The Joplin Conservation Office, located in the Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, is your local connection to Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. Stop by and purchase hunting and fishing permits, attend a nature program, go for a hike, enjoy a picnic, or access Shoal Creek. Within the 190 acres of Wildcat Park, you will find a diverse mix of wildlife habitats rich with flora and fauna. From I-44, take exit 6, and turn south on MO-86. Turn right on Riviera Drive to enter Wildcat Park.

#### HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM  
Closed all state holidays.  
Audubon Center hours vary.

#### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-629-3423 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

## March and April Events

### Spring Break-Out The Backpack Scavenger Hunt

March 17–21 • Monday–Friday • 8 AM–4 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

*No registration required (ages 4–12 with an adult mentor)*

Come anytime during the week to enjoy a scavenger hunt along the trail and borrow a backpack filled with supplies to help you explore the creatures and plants that live at Wildcat Glades.

### Missouri Snakes

March 18 • Tuesday • 2–3 PM  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

*No registration required (all ages)*

Here's your chance to find out what role snakes have in nature and why snakes maybe aren't as scary as you think. Learn about these fascinating, often misunderstood reptiles. Observe snakes up close and maybe even touch one!

### Trees, Please–Identification Hike

April 5 • Saturday • 2–3:30 PM  
Bicentennial Conservation Area (Neosho)  
*Registration required (ages 8 and up with an adult mentor)*

Discover how trees and forests benefit our daily lives while exploring a local conservation area. This naturalist-led hike is less than two miles and rated easy to moderate. Bring water and wear comfortable hiking shoes.

### Earth Day Naturescaping And Rain Garden Event

April 19 • Saturday • 9 AM–12 NOON  
Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

*Registration required (ages 14 and up)*

Adding native plantings, such as a rain garden, to your yard will help provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife as well as help to reduce flooding, sediment, and other pollutants harmful to local streams. You'll learn why and how to include native plantings in your landscape, how to install a rain garden, what plants to select, and how they benefit wildlife. Handouts and native plants will be available.

### Family Fishing Night

April 25 • Friday • 6–8 PM  
Walter Woods Conservation Area (Joplin)  
*Registration required (families)*

Have you been yearning to enjoy one of the Ozarks favorite outdoor activities and don't know where to start? Parents grab the kids or kids grab your parents and come join us for an evening of fishing and family memories. We will start with the basics and then head to the ol' fishing hole and catch a few. Bring your own poles or borrow ours. Bait will be provided. A valid fishing permit is required for Missouri residents ages 16 to 64 and nonresidents ages 16 and up.



## SPRING BREAK PASSPORTS TO DISCOVERY!

**March 17–23**

MONDAY TO SATURDAY: 9AM–5PM  
SUNDAY: NOON–4PM



Stop at any of the eight southwest Missouri or southeast Kansas nature centers or historic sites for "Your PEEP Passport" to Discovery. Each site has a passport page with information and questions. Answer the questions and receive a stamp. Collect six stamps and earn a special PEEP (Partnership for Environment Education Program) patch! The hours above are for the Joplin Conservation Office and Audubon Center. Check with the other sites listed on the passport for their hours of operation. Passports are free and no registration is required.

## Tree Selection And Planting Workshops

March 24 • Monday • 6:30–9 PM • Greenfield Community Building in City Park  
(corner of Park Street and Toney Avenue)

March 27 • Thursday • 6:30–9 PM • Mount Vernon City Hall Council Chambers,  
319 East Dallas Street (entrance off east parking lot)

March 31 • Monday • 6:30–9 PM • Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center, Joplin  
*Register by calling 417-629-3423 (Ages 10 and up)* Before you select and plant a tree, you need to ask several questions to evaluate your planting site. This is a decision that lasts a lifetime or longer. Learn to make informed decisions by attending this program.

## Enhance Your Habitat--Free Trees And Shrubs Event

April 26 • Saturday • 10 AM–2 PM (while quantities last)

Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center (Joplin)

*No registration required (all ages)* Trees provided through a partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation and the Community Foundation of SWMO; shrubs provided by the Conservation Department.

Trees and shrubs provide many benefits to humans AND wildlife! If you could use a few more trees or shrubs on your property, drive by the Wildcat Glade Conservation & Audubon Center. Staff and volunteers will help fill your order so you can plant at home and enhance your habitat. Information and growing requirements will be available. Natives are adapted to our climate and more resistant to drought, disease, and pests.

# Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

4897 N. Farm Road 61, Ash Grove, MO

65604 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/288](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/288)



## March and April Events

### Cross Trail Outfitters

March 20 • Thursday • 6–8 PM

*Registration required (ages 7–17)*

Join the families of Cross Trail Outfitters and learn all sorts of techniques for hunting and different outdoor activities. This program is designed for youth ages 7–17, but parents will have fun learning too. For more information or to register, email Kirk Bouse at [<khouse@teamcto.org>](mailto:khouse@teamcto.org).

### Shotgun Shooting Basics

March 22 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

*Registration required (all ages)*

Join us to discover the joys of shotgun shooting. We will discuss shotgun nomenclature, stance, dominant eye, mounting, moving the shotgun, and much more. You may use our shotguns or plan to use your own. Please make sure your shotgun is completely unloaded before arriving.

### Turkey Hunting Basics

March 29 • Saturday • 8:30 AM–4:30 PM

*Registration required (all ages)*

Join us to discover the basics of turkey hunting in the spring. We will cover safety, scouting, calling, proper setup, shotgun ballistics, and much more.

## Turkey Hunting Safety Tips

Hunting the eastern wild turkey is one of the most enjoyable and exciting experiences you will ever have in your hunting career. As with any kind of hunting, though, safety must be your highest priority and here are a few tips to help keep you safe while in the turkey woods this spring.

- Always be positive about your target and what is beyond it. It is too easy to only see color or movement and mistakenly shoot another hunter.
- Just because you hear a sound associated with a wild turkey, this does not always mean the sound was made by a turkey. Again, always make sure to identify your complete target.
- If hunting on public ground, avoid using gobble calls because it may attract other hunters in the area.
- Always use camouflage clothing and avoid using the colors of the male turkey—red, white, blue, or black.
- Use of decoys can be helpful when trying to attract a turkey, but they also may attract other hunters which can create a potentially dangerous situation.
- If taking a young person or a person new to hunting, you may choose to use a hunting blind. Blinds mask movement from the turkey's keen eyesight, but they also hide you from other hunters who may slip in near your hunting spot decreasing your safety.
- If hunting in the woods, be sure to select a tree to sit beside that is wider than your shoulder width. This allows for protection from behind your position should another hunter slip in on you.
- You should seek permission from landowners prior to the season and always get permission for anyone you may bring along on your hunt. Leave the property better than you found it.

If you need more information about how to safely hunt wild turkeys, we invite you to attend our spring turkey hunting clinic scheduled for March 29, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

—Mike Brooks, Outdoor Education Center Supervisor



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### Archery Basics

April 26 • Saturday • 8:30–11:30 AM

*Registration required (ages 6 and up)*

Join us to discover the basics of archery shooting. We will cover things like bow nomenclature, hand set, bow set, pre-draw, stance and much more and then go shooting on the static archery range. You may bring your own bow to the program or use ours.



To get to the Andy Dalton Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center, take US Highway 160 west of Willard, turn south on Farm Road 61, and go 2.5 miles, facility on the west side of road. Facilities include an outdoor education center and archery, rifle, pistol, and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

### HOURS:

**September 14–April 14**

Monday and Thursday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

**April 15–September 13**

Monday: 9 AM–4:30 PM

Thursday: 9 AM–7:30 PM

Friday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and all state holidays. Hours are subject to change.

### FACILITIES AND FEES:

Available for individual and group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range fee: \$3 per booth per hour
- Trap/skeet range fee: \$3 per person per round of 25 clay targets
- Shotgun patterning range: \$3 per person per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour
- Group use fee: \$20 per hour plus \$3 per round of 25 clay targets

### TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-742-4361 or email [<DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov>](mailto:DaltonRange@mdc.mo.gov) to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.



# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/287](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/287)



The Springfield Conservation Nature Center is located in southeast Springfield just west of US-65 off the James River Freeway (US-60). Indoors, enjoy nature exhibits, attend programs, purchase hunting and fishing permits, browse through a nature-related gift shop, and pick up free conservation brochures. Outdoors, enjoy three miles of hiking trails through a variety of natural communities. Call to schedule a naturalist-led program for your organized group.

## CURRENT HOURS:

**March 1–October 31**

**Building:** Tuesday–Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

Sunday: Noon–5 PM

Closed Monday

**Trails:** Sunday–Saturday: 8 AM–8 PM

## TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 417-888-4237 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to others.

## Temporary Exhibits

**March • Mingo Swamp Flora and Fauna Photography Contest–2013**

**April • Fungi of the Ozarks**

*Mushroom Photography by Mark Bower*  
Missouri Mycological Society–Springfield Chapter

## Bird Banding

**March 1  
Saturday**

**1:30–4:30 PM**

Join the Missouri River Bird Observatory for a winter bird banding demonstration. Birds will be captured around the feeding stations and then banded in a location for easy viewing. Stop by anytime.

## March Events

### Crappie Fishing For Beginners

March 6 • Thursday • 6:30–8 PM

*Registration begins February 15 (ages 12 and up)*

Whether you fish for crappie during winter or wait for them to spawn in the spring, crappie can be caught throughout the year. Join Table Rock Fisheries Biologist Shane Bush and Outdoor Skills Specialist Greg Collier as we explore when, where, and how to catch one of the Ozarks favorite panfish.

### The Art Of Woodcarving

March 8 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

*Registration begins March 1 (ages 12 and up)*

Try your hand at woodcarving with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as instructors.

### Woodcarving Demonstration

March 8 • Saturday • 10 AM–4 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Visit with members of the Southern Missouri Woodcarving Artists as they share information with the “wood-be” carver, and demonstrate carving techniques.

### Conservation TEEN Club–Hiking

March 8 • Saturday • 10 AM–4 PM

*Registration begins March 1 (ages 12–17)*

Join us as we explore the Pleasant Hope Conservation Area. Dress for the weather. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

### Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

March 12 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

*No registration required (ages 2–6)*

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

### Ozark Trail–350 Miles And Growing

March 14 • Friday • 6:30–8 PM

*Registration begins March 1 (ages 7 and up)*

The Ozark Trail, which now exceeds 350 miles, provides a backcountry experience through the Missouri Ozarks. Learn how to plan trips lasting from a day to three weeks from Executive Director Matt Atnip and President and Planning Chair Steve Coates. They will provide an overview of the existing trail and plans for expansion. Brochures, maps, and trip planning expertise will be available in break-out sessions. **Attention Hikers and Trekkers:** You are invited to attend a social from 8–9pm to network with other hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. Drinks and snacks provided.

### Nature And The Arts

**Artist In Residence–Ann Grotjan**

March 15 • Saturday • 1–4 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Stop by anytime to watch potter and sculptor Ann Grotjan create intricate carving and nature-related details on her artwork. Pieces will be available to purchase.

### Nature And The Arts Part Of The Circle

March 15 • Saturday • 7–8 PM

*Registration begins March 1 (ages 12 and up)*

Take a mini-vacation for the spirit with professional photographer and musician Lloyd Grotjan. Sit back and watch as Lloyd combines the best of his thirty years of nature photography with his original music from the CD releases *Songs from the Ozark Plateau* and *Twelve Moons*. Combining photography, music, and live performance, Lloyd's programs are a feast of sound, sight, color, and feeling. CDs and prints will be available to purchase.

## Little Acorns

Please limit to one per month.

Programs are 45 minutes in length.

## March Events

*Registration begins March 1 (ages 3–6)*

### Salamander Slide

March 8 • Saturday • 11 AM

March 13 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Meet the salamander family as we investigate some of their special features.

### Spring Peepers

March 20 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

March 29 • Saturday • 11 AM

It's time for some frog-frolicking fun exploring the life cycle and world of the tiny peepers.

### Spring Has Sprung

March 28 • Friday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Come hear a special story about some nature center residents as they wake up to spring!

## April Events

*Registration begins April 1 (ages 3–6)*

### Worm Squirm

April 10 • Thursday • 11 AM or 1:30 PM

Worms squiggle and wiggle and crawl through the dirt. They eat dead plants and make soil for the earth. Join Volunteer Naturalist Nancy Ryan and learn more.

### Hooray For Hummingbirds

April 17 • Thursday • 1:30 PM

April 19 • Saturday • 11 AM

Preschoolers, give a cheer to welcome the ruby-throated hummingbirds back to the Ozarks. Catch the excitement of learning about these jewels of the bird world.

### Snappers, Sliders, And Stinkpots

April 26 • Saturday • 11 AM

Turtles come in many shapes and sizes. Learn the names of common turtles and discover where and how they live.

# Springfield Conservation Nature Center

4601 S. Nature Center Way, Springfield, MO 65804 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/287](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/287)

## The World Beneath Our Feet—Caves

March 20 • Thursday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 10 and up)

Come explore the wonderful world beneath the surface with the photographers of the Springfield Plateau Grotto. The program will show the great and delicate beauty to be found in the caves of the Ozarks.

## Outdoor Treasure Hunting Geocaching Basics

March 22 • Saturday • 9–11 AM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 18 and up)

Geocaching is an outdoor “treasure” hunt using GPS units. Learn basic GPS use and then hit the trails to find some “treasure.” GPS units provided. Dress for the weather.

## Creating Nature Art

March 22 • Saturday • 10–11:30 AM

Grades kindergarten to second (ages 5–7)

March 22 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

Grades third to fifth (ages 8–12)

Registration begins March 1

Find artistic inspiration in nature’s colors, trees, and the beauty of the spring season. Join art instructor Janel Bagby and learn how to create your own nature-inspired art.

## Family Treasure Hunting

March 22 • Saturday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 8 and up)

Parents, grandparents, and adult mentors, bring your youngster(s) to learn a new outdoor skill. Geocaching is an outdoor “treasure” hunt using GPS units. We’ll go over basic GPS use and then hit the trails to find some “treasure.” Dress for the weather. GPS units provided.

## Introduction To Missouri’s Raptors

March 25 • Tuesday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 12 and up)

Join expert birder and Missouri Prairie Foundation technical advisor Jeff Cantrell as he shares interesting life history information and helpful identification tips about these majestic birds that call Missouri home.

## Conservation Kids’ Club Salamander Secrets

March 27 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 7–12)

From tiny, delicate newts to monstrous-looking hellbenders, many types of salamanders live in Missouri. Learn about the lives of these secretive and silent creatures and how you can help protect them.

## Hiking Club

March 29 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins March 1 (ages 18 and up)

Hike off-trail in the Mark Twain National Forest near Chadwick with Volunteer Naturalist Mike Mihalik. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is four miles and rated moderate to difficult.



We are partnering with the Springfield-Greene County Library District’s one book, one community celebration, The Big Read. This year’s selection is *Call of the Wild* by Jack London. Look for this symbol for *Call of the Wild* programs.

## April Events

### Native Plant Sale And Seminar

April 5 • Saturday • 9 AM–3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Using native plants can save you time and money and can also help with wildlife conservation efforts. Join us to learn more about our beautiful native plants and their benefits, where to use them, and which ones are best for wildlife. The day features a native plant sale with various Missouri vendors, a variety of exhibitors, as well as a series of guest speakers. Call today for a flier and join us for this fun and educational event designed to help you discover the beauty and value of native plants.

### Primitive Skills Series Useful Plant Hike



April 6 • Sunday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 15 and up)

Plants have always been important to humans for food, medicine, and other purposes. Volunteer Specialist Don Brink will explore the folklore and modern uses of several Missouri plants during this *Call of the Wild* program.

### Story Time With Ms. Ladybug

April 9 • Wednesday • 11–11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 2–6)

Join Volunteer Naturalist Joyce Tolliver as she reads a nature story and shares activities with your 2–6 year olds. Please, no organized groups.

### Hiking Club

April 12 • Saturday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 18 and up)

While known for trout fishing, Roaring River State Park also has an array of hiking trails. Volunteer Naturalist Pat Stritzel will help you become familiar with their trail system. Meet at the nature center and carpool. Bring a sack lunch and water and wear comfortable hiking shoes. Hike is five miles and rated moderate to difficult.

### Spring Wildflower Hike

April 16 • Wednesday • 1–2:30 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 8 and up)

Take a stroll on the trails for a close look at spring wildflowers.

### The Call Of The Wild With Ralph Duren



April 17 • Thursday • 7–8 PM

Registration begins April 1 (all ages)

People across the nation know that retired Missouri Conservation Department employee Ralph Duren can call turkeys—he’s a national champion. However, he can imitate nearly 75 other kinds of wildlife including songbirds, amphibians, and mammals. Celebrate the diversity of wildlife during this *Call of the Wild* program as you listen to Ralph mimic and talk about the animals he knows so well.

### Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers

April 19 • Saturday • 10 AM–4 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Stop by to see members of the Ozark Whittlers & Woodcarvers transform wood into treasures.

### Parents As Teachers Story Time

April 22 • Tuesday • 9:30, 10:30, or 11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 0–5)

Parent Educators from Parents As Teachers will offer a *Nature At Its Best* story time. Enjoy stories, activities, and finger plays designed for children from birth to age five. Each session is forty-five minutes in length.

### Hike For Homeschoolers

April 22 • Tuesday • 1–3 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 5 and up)

Join us for a naturalist-guided hike to learn about plants and animals. Wear comfortable hiking shoes and feel free to bring journals, cameras, and binoculars.

### Conservation Kids’ Club Spring Symphony



April 24 • Thursday • 6:30–7:45 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 7–12)

Sweet-sounding bird songs tell us that spring has arrived, but birds aren’t just “whistlin’ Dixie”—their songs have purpose and meaning. Find out what the singing means during this *Call of the Wild* program. Dress for an outdoor hike.

### Conservation TEEN Club—Fishing

April 26 • Saturday • 9 AM–3 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 12–17)

Come and have a great time chasing lunkers. Fishing will be catch-and-release and participants 16 years of age and older must have a valid fishing permit. Dress for the weather. Lunch and transportation will be provided.

### Nature Art With A Chinese Brushstroke

April 26 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM (ages 8 and up)  
2:45–4:15 PM (ages 15 and up)

Registration begins April 1

Art instructor and nature enthusiast Hing Wah Hatch will increase your powers of observation as she demonstrates how to paint plants and animals. Participants will go home with more nature knowledge and their own masterpiece.

### Bird Chorus



April 30 • Wednesday • 2–3:30 PM

Registration begins April 1 (ages 7 and up)

Spring migrants are arriving in Missouri and making their presence known by their appearance and their songs. Learn how to identify them through sight and by song during this indoor and outdoor *Call of the Wild* program. Bring binoculars if you have them.

# Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center

483 Hatchery Road, Branson, MO 65616 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/290](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/290)



The Fish Hatchery and Conservation Center is located on 221 acres in Branson off Highway 165 next to Table Rock Dam. Outdoors, visitors will experience an active fish hatchery with 700,000 rainbow and brown trout in 30 pools with opportunities to feed the fish. Indoors, enjoy a 3,500 gallon aquarium and hands-on nature exhibits and purchase hunting and fishing permits. The area also features four hiking trails, a picnic area, a boat ramp, and access to Lake Taneycomo.

## **FACILITY HOURS:**

### **Memorial Day–Labor Day**

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–6 PM

### **Remainder of Year**

Sunday–Saturday: 9 AM–5 PM

## **AREA AND TRAIL HOURS:**

4 AM–10 PM

The area is open to fishing 24 hours daily, but special permits and regulations do apply. Check the current fishing regulations or call for details.

## **TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:**

Programs are free. Call 417-334-4865, Ext. 0, to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

## **FISHING**

### **LAKE TANEYCOMO:**

Before fishing on Lake Taneycomo, become familiar with the regulations and restrictions. Come by for a free brochure of the entire lake including fishing accesses. For specific details about trout fishing here and across the state, visit [mdc.mo.gov/node/5603](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/5603).

## *March and April Events*

### **Bluebird House Workshop**

March 15 • Saturday • 10–11:30 AM

*Registration required (families, ages 6 and up)*

If you enjoy having bluebirds in your area, here is your chance to learn more about them and why they are the state bird of Missouri. Each family will get the chance to assemble their own bluebird house and take it home. Each family will make one house and must make their own reservation. All you need to bring is a hammer and an interest in bluebirds.

### **Hummingbirds**

March 22 • Saturday • 10–11:30 AM

*Registration required (families, all ages)*

Now is a great time to get your hummingbird feeders ready for our returning hummingbirds. This program will help you understand what hummingbirds eat, how to attract them, how to plant hummer-friendly plants,



and how to maintain feeders. Each family will receive a free jewelweed plant to take home.

### **Wildflower And Mushroom Hike**

April 5 • Saturday • 10 AM–Noon

*Registration required (ages 12 and up)*

Join us as we take a hike along Taneycomo to see what wildflowers are in bloom. Some of these flowers have unusual names such as toothwort and trout lily (a hatchery favorite). This will also be a great time to look for more mushrooms. We will not be collecting flowers; however, you can bring a mesh bag because you may take home any more mushrooms you find. Although the trail is easy to walk, we will be walking off the trail to see flowers and mushrooms. Bring your camera and a bottle of water.

### **Earth Day Special Event**

April 19 • Saturday • 9 AM–2 PM

*No registration required (all ages)*

Join us for our 10th Annual Earth Day celebration packed with games and learning stations to help you become a better ecological citizen. With 2014 being the “Year of the Salamander,” several stations will involve habitat, water, life cycles, amphibians, and water critters. Other stations will include endangered/extinct animals, eco-games, recycling, nature art, hypermiling, and alternative vehicles. The first 500 visitors will receive a free tree seedling.

## **Extinction**

### *What have we learned in the last 100 years?*

The year 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of a low point in the conservation movement. In September 1914, Martha the last living passenger pigeon died in captivity in the Cincinnati Zoo. Why would the death of a single bird be so sad? Because it marked the first time in history when we could document the extinction of an entire species. What makes this so unbelievable is that in the early 1800s passenger pigeon populations were believed to be as high as six million birds. This single species represented 25 to 40 percent of all North American birds and within 100 years they were all gone. This now extinct species was a victim of widespread overharvesting and being unable to reproduce when numbers got too low.

So what have we learned? No species, plant or animal, is immune from extinction. All species play a part in our ecosystem. The largest threats to plants, animals, and communities are overharvesting, diseases, pollution, and habitat loss. While the passenger pigeon was removed primarily through extensive and targeted overharvesting, the most important threat to any species is habitat loss. One of the great things that we have learned is to look at the health of the community or as Aldo Leopold coined, “the land ethic.” Today we understand that plants and animals will do best if we look at them as a whole community and involve landowners, managers, businesses, all levels of government, and the general public.

Knowing that the definition of conservation is “wise use,” the Missouri Department of Conservation works with you and for you to sustain healthy forests, fish, and wildlife. This means using a variety of tools, including hunting and trapping, to help improve our plant and wildlife communities. It is important to remember that with the advent of modern conservation practices in the 1930s, no game species has gone extinct.

Being aware of the plants and animals that are in most peril is the first way you can help prevent animals from becoming endangered or extinct. To learn more about helping Missouri’s endangered plants and animals, go to [mdc.mo.gov/node/4067](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/4067). The more you learn the less likely we will have to commemorate another “Martha.”

— John Miller, Interpretive Center Manager



# Southwest Regional Office

2630 N. Mayfair Avenue, Springfield, MO 65803 • [mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)

## Hunter Education Sessions

### Classroom Sessions

Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center . . . . . March 5 • Wednesday • 6–10 PM  
April 2 • Wednesday • 6–10 PM

Springfield Conservation Nature Center . . . . . March 15 • Saturday • 8 AM–NOON  
April 12 • Saturday • 8 AM–NOON

### Skills Sessions

Andy Dalton Shooting Range . . . . . March 7 • Friday • 6–10 PM  
March 8 • Saturday • 8 AM–NOON  
April 4 • Friday • 6–10 PM  
April 5 • Saturday • 8 AM–NOON

Springfield Conservation Nature Center . . . . . March 15 • Saturday • 1–5 PM  
April 12 • Saturday • 1–5 PM

Wildcat Glades Conservation & Audubon Center . . . . . March 10 • Monday • 6–10 PM  
March 26 • Wednesday • 6–10 PM  
April 3 • Thursday • 6–10 PM  
April 4 • Friday • 6–10 PM

Visit [mdc.mo.gov/node/3722](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/3722) to register for these sessions and to check for session changes and additions.



The Southwest Regional Office is conveniently located just west of the intersection of US-65 and Kearney in Springfield. The public may obtain information on land management, nuisance wildlife, educational opportunities, river and pond management, and more, as well as purchase hunting and fishing permits and obtain area brochures for Conservation Department areas.

**HOURS:** Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM  
Closed all state holidays

**PHONE:** 417-895-6880

## Morel Mushroom Hunting

*an Ozarks tradition*



*"There just don't seem to be any really big ones this year."*

It won't be long before Ozarkers will be searching leaf-covered forest floors and river bottom areas in pursuit of a popular kind of hunting—morel mushrooms.

Morel hunting is an Ozarks tradition that, for most people, swings into high gear sometime around early to mid-April. Besides being a great addition to the dinner table, looking for these tasty treats is a great reason to get outdoors. If you're looking for a cure for cabin fever or a way to get the family outside, a morel hunt may be the solution. Morels, like all mushrooms, are the reproductive structures of a fungus. Fungi are not plants; they are unique organisms unto themselves. Mushrooms sprout from a net of microscopic underground fibers called hyphae. Collectively, the hyphae make up the mycelium, which is the equivalent of the underground body of the fungus organism. The mycelium grows in materials it feeds from—soil, wood, or decaying matter. This fungal feeding process provides valuable clean-up assistance in nature by helping to decompose rotting logs and other dead

vegetative matter found in forests. The morel mushrooms that sprout from these fibers carry the spores necessary for the fungus to reproduce.

Morels are found in various locations, but moist forested areas, south-facing slopes, and river bottoms are good places to begin looking. A good thing to take on morel hunts, particularly if you're new to the activity, is a mushroom identification book. Keep an eye out for birds and wildflowers too. Some of the earliest spring wildflowers appear in timbered areas and spring is also a good time to spot a number of bird species in bright courtship colors. If you've never eaten morels before, make your first morel meal a small one. It's wise to first find out if morels agree with your system. If they do, it's time to chow down.

**Remember, April 12–13 is Missouri's youth spring turkey season and April 21–May 11 is the state's regular spring turkey season.** The shooting hours of the youth season are a half-hour before sunrise to sunset and the shooting hours of the regular season are a half-hour before sunrise to 1 p.m. Any mushroom hunting trips you plan should probably steer clear of those dates and times or be at areas where no hunting is taking place.

You can learn more about mushrooms at your nearest Missouri Department of Conservation office or at [mdc.mo.gov](http://mdc.mo.gov).

—Francis Skalicky, Media Specialist

Missouri Community Forestry Council Annual Conference in Jefferson City

**Preserving, Sustaining, and Growing the Urban Forest**

March 10–12

The conference provides attendees the opportunity to expand their knowledge on various urban tree topics and network with peers. Those interested in trees, tree board members, city staff, professional arborists, and foresters are common attendees. Learn more and register at [mocommunitytrees.com/mcfcconference2014.html](http://mocommunitytrees.com/mcfcconference2014.html).

## Nature Connections Newsletter

To begin receiving the newsletter by mail, call any of the offices listed in the newsletter and leave your name and address.

To begin receiving the newsletter electronically by e-mail, go online to <[mdc.mo.gov/node/257](http://mdc.mo.gov/node/257)>, click the "Subscribe by Email" box on the right-hand side of the page, and scroll down to "Nature Connections."

**What's HOT in the NATURE SHOP!**

**SAVE 20%**  
MARCH 1 - APRIL 30

*Spring Woody Vines of Missouri*

*Discover Missouri Natural Areas*

Shrubs and Woody Vines of Missouri is a concise, easy-to-carry field guide that features 170 species of native shrubs and vines. Discover Missouri Natural Areas highlights natural history information and brings to life the outstanding geological, biological, and ecological features of each area.

Available at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center and Southwest Regional Office



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Missouri Department of Conservation



*We help people  
discover nature*

### Conservation Showcase:

## White Bass Fishing In Table Rock Lake

Table Rock Lake is a large reservoir located in the Missouri counties of Barry, Stone, and Taney and the Arkansas counties of Boone and Carroll. This reservoir encompasses 43,100 acres and 745 miles of shoreline and has gained national attention for its excellent black bass fishing. Table Rock Lake also boasts opportunities for anglers to catch a wide variety of sport fish, including crappie, walleye, paddlefish, and white bass. White bass fishing can be outstanding on this reservoir. Due to the abundance of threadfin shad in Table Rock, the growth rate of white bass is phenomenal, commonly reaching 12 inches at age one and 14 inches at age two. The typical lifespan of a white bass is four years, but they can live longer and grow to lengths exceeding 18 inches in Table Rock Lake.

White bass are active, schooling fish. They appear in large numbers where food is abundant and move on when the supply is exhausted. They feed most actively in the early morning and late evening, often near the surface where forage fish tend to concentrate. Large schools move rapidly about in pursuit of baitfish, often driving them to the surface where they may leap from the water to evade capture. Anglers fortunate enough to be fishing in areas where white bass aggressively chase schools of shad to the surface can catch an abundance of fish in a very short time. When looking for schools of white bass, pay attention to the activity of gulls in the area. When the whites are feeding on shad, they will force them near the surface attracting gulls. If you see gulls actively diving and feeding, you can bet that the shad they are feeding on have been forced to the surface by actively feeding fish.

Fishing for white bass in Table Rock Lake, like many other lakes, can range from very fast paced and exciting to painfully frustrating. The time to fish for white bass is during their spring spawning migrations or when large schools are feeding near the surface in mid-summer. During these times, fish may be caught on every cast. In the spring (mid-March to late April), white bass move into the river arms of Table Rock Lake—mainly the James River, Kings River, and Long Creek—to spawn. During this time, they are commonly found around shallow gravel, sand, or mud flats. Inside non-channel bends with little structure are good areas to search for white bass in the river arms. During the summer, many anglers will find white bass in areas primarily inhabited by black bass species. White bass can be located by looking for fish surfacing for about fifteen to thirty seconds then disappearing again. They will move to another area close, normally out of casting distance, and repeat this action. When they are not surfacing, white bass can be found in the deeper, main lake portions as well as in habitats similar to the river arms, but deeper. These fish are harder to locate unless a fish finder is in use. Locating schools of shad in deeper, flat areas using a fish finder is a great method to locate good numbers of white bass.

While not many anglers choose to fish for white bass during the late fall and winter, the fishing can be excellent. Due to cold water temperature you will not encounter schools of white bass actively chasing shad on the surface. However, they continue to feed during the winter at greater depths, usually on or near the main lake. Unlike spring when the fish are migrating up the river arms to spawn, white bass in the fall and winter are following the shad. Long, deep gravel points and flats seem to be the best. The best bait by far is a 1/2 ounce white or chrome jigging spoon. White bass will often chase schools of shad in the open water of the main lake, so using good electronics to locate the baitfish is key.

Most anglers find that silver, white, chrome, and any combination of shad-colored lures will work best for white bass in Table Rock Lake. Many lures can be used at different times of the year under many circumstances. Lures can range from 1/16 ounce white crappie jigs and grubs to 1/4 ounce jigging spoons, rattle-traps, crankbaits, and even full-size top-water plugs. When white bass are surfacing, a faster moving swimming lure works great. If white bass have been found, but not surfacing, a slower moving lure usually works the best. More information on white bass fishing and Table Rock Lake can be found at <[fishing.mdc.mo.gov/reports/table-rock-lake-main-lake](http://fishing.mdc.mo.gov/reports/table-rock-lake-main-lake)>.

—Shane Bush, Fisheries Management Biologist  
Mike Allen, Fisheries Biologist